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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: Human Rights: Guo Feixiong Finally Allowed Legal Counsel

Ref: A) Beijing 24741; B) Guangzhou 30533; C) Guangzhou 29575

11. (U) Classified by Consul General Robert Goldberg.
Reason 1.4 (d).

12. (C) SUMMARY AND COMMENT: On January 8, legal activist Guo Feixiong (arrested on September 28) was allowed to retain legal counsel according to fellow rights protection activist Tang Jingling. Tang believes Guo's case, unlike that of his former boss Gao Zhisheng, has been delayed because Guo lacks pressure on his behalf from the international community. Tang predicts the trial will begin in a month and that Guo will likely be found guilty and sentenced to three years in prison. Beijing-based lawyer Mo Shaoping will defend Guo; he is backed financially by Guo's sympathizers in China and abroad (though funds remain sparse). Guo has been detained four times since 2005, mostly in connection with his defense of the Taishi villagers. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT

13. (C) On January 9, South China rights protection lawyer (weiquan) Tang Jingling (ref C) told Congenoff that legal proceedings for detained activist Guo Feixiong (real name Yang Maodong) could begin in a month. Guo was initially detained on September 14, 2006 and formerly arrested on September 28, charged with "illegal business operation" for allegedly publishing and selling 20,000 books in an improper manner. He was accused of setting up a fake publishing house and using an ISBN without permission (ref B). Guo first gained national attention in the summer of 2005 when he provided legal counsel for victims of the Taishi village incident. Tang said Guo Feixiong's wife Zhang Qing told him that she had received a letter from the Guangzhou Procuratorate informing her that she is allowed to hire a lawyer for Guo's case. According to Tang, Zhang planned to visit the Guangzhou Procuratorate on January 9 to retrieve the legal documents related to Guo's case and pass them to Beijing-based human rights lawyer Mo Shaoping, who will represent Guo.

14. (C) Tang said he was surprised that Guo's case has been delayed much longer than that of Gao Zhisheng (ref A), Guo's former boss at the Beijing-based Shengzhi law firm, although both lawyers were detained at approximately the same time (Gao, August 15, 2006; Guo, September 14). Tang had originally predicted that Guo would be released before January 1, (or approximately three months after his formal detention date, September 28). In fact, Tang had urged

Guo's wife not to complain to officials because he was sure of an early release. Tang believes that Gao Zhisheng's speedier trial was because of international pressure. Tang said that Gao's connection and defense of Falun Gong practitioners was the source of his fame, while Guo remains relatively unknown.

Current Condition and Future

¶5. (C) Zhang has not seen her husband since September 13, so Tang was unable to comment on his condition. The South China Morning Post, however, reported that in September Guo faced daily questioning exceeding the standard 11-hour time limit and was only allowed to sleep one hour a day. Tang expects the trial could start by February or March, perhaps concluding after one month. Tang predicted that Guo would be found guilty, likely to face the maximum sentence of three years.

International Support

¶6. (C) Both Tang and U.S.-based human rights activist Hu Ping (leader of the U.S.-based NGO, Human Rights in China and editor of the journal "Beijing Spring") have been collecting money on Guo's behalf. Since Guo's detention, Tang said he has collected 80,000 RMB (USD 10,000) just among his close friends, while Hu has collected between USD 4,000-6,000 from overseas Chinese in the United States. The money will be used for Mo Shaoping's travel fees and hotel expenses.

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